

## DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident, Gulf of Mexico

**Subject** Potential characteristics of shoreline oil

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**Category** Shoreline Assessments

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*Entry is **PRIVATE**.*

NOAA Preliminary thoughts on oil behavior:  
Deepwater Horizon Weathered oil -

The weathered oil will have a brown to orange looking appearance and may change upon exposure to sunlight. It will have little or no odor. Because of its' composition, this oil will be very sticky. The oil may exist as bands of floating oil and as patches or tar balls that contain water and oil mixtures (emulsions).

The oil may pick up grit and sand and become heavier than water and sink or stay on the bottom in intertidal areas.

Shoreline impacts of the oil - The oil on the shoreline will be very sticky and smother intertidal plants and animals. As it weathers it will look like an asphalt roadway with a sticky surface.

Environmental fate and degradation -the oil will be resistant to biodegradation. It will persist on shorelines, take the appearance of an asphalted road. There may be tar balls of all sizes that may wash up on the beaches and attach to structures there.

Toxicity - The environmental toxicity of the weathered oil is not great. The

bigger impact will be contact of the oil, smothering and coating to surfaces due to the sticky nature of this oil.

Burning the weathered oil - this will be difficult at sea and when the oil washes up on beaches, because of the oil composition doesn't accommodate combustion easily.

Dispersant use -weathered and emulsified oil will be difficult to disperse.

Good video

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6434676n&tag=contentMain;contentBody>